

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are cancelled and Claims 21-38 are added. Claims 21-38 remain in the application. No new matter is added by the amendments to the claims.

The Rejections:

In the Office Action dated August 5, 2005, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Knap. The Examiner stated that Knap discloses a device and method to seal a gap between a car wall near an opening and a door 5/6, the device comprising a sealing strip 22 having a hollow body with a wall 32 that is movable into sealing engagement when compressed air from an actuator/reservoir is supplied to the body.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-13, 16, 17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoo (5,131,504) in view of Knap. The Examiner stated that Yoo discloses an elevator car and method of sealing an elevator car door by providing a sealing strip 30 on an elevator door 12 to seal the gap between the door 12 and the car 10. The Examiner further stated that Yoo discloses that the sealing strip can be any type of seal such as a rubber seal (C. 2, L. 52-53), but does not specifically disclose an inflatable seal and actuator. The Examiner noted that Knap teaches a seal between a sliding door and car which seal comprises a hollow body with a wall 32 that is movable into sealing engagement when compressed air from an actuator/reservoir is supplied to the body and the sealing strip is received in a groove on the door (groove defined by 31). According to the Examiner, the strip would continuously encompass all sides of the door (see Fig. 8) and Knap teaches that this seal provides an effective seal against sound and vibration of the doors while being concealed against tampering and contamination. Therefore, it is the Examiner's opinion that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the sealing strip of Knap with the elevator car of Yoo to improve the life and sealing function of the seal system.

The Examiner rejected Claims 18 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoo in view of Knap and further in view of Moody (6,485,029). The Examiner admitted that Knap does not disclose that the movable wall portion does not extend out of the groove when in a relieved state. The Examiner stated that Moody teaches an inflatable sealing system for a door that includes a retainer and seal formed such that the movable wall portion does not

000132702/0099/657816-1

extend out of the groove when in a relieved state to improve the reliability of the seal (C. 3, L. 20-24) and, therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the seal and groove such that the movable wall portion does not extend out of the groove when in a relieved state to improve the reliability of the seal as taught by Moody.

The Cited References:

The Knap patent shows sliding doors for a passenger vehicle such as a rapid transit passenger car. The doors 5/6 are mounted external to the car at a passageway aperture 4 and brush-type seal strips 27 are mounted on the car exterior at the edges of the aperture 4 to seal the lateral sides against the doors. A brushtype seal strip 28 is secured at the bottoms of the doors 5/6 to seal against a threshold member 24. A pair of weather strips 29 is fixed to the exterior of the car spaced from the seal strips 27. A pair of three-sided inflatable air seals 22 is mounted on the car exterior and extends completely about the aperture 4 with lateral portions being between adjacent ones of the seal strip 27 and the weather strips 29.

The Yoo et al. patent shows a brush 36 attached to the trailing edge of an elevator car door 12 and extending into contact with a front panel 18 of the car 10 to function as a noise seal.

The Moody et al. patent shows an inflatable seal 22 used to seal the gap 16 between a shutter door 12 and an opening 14 in an outer hull of a submarine.

Applicants' Response:

Claim 1 has been rewritten as Claim 21 which now defines a groove formed in a surface of one of an elevator car door and an elevator car wall, a sealing strip mounted in the groove and having a movable wall portion for sealing the gap, and an actuator means for selectively moving the wall portion across the gap and into contact with another one of the car door and the car wall whereby the gap is sealed. Independent Claim 26 is similar to Claim 21 but defines the groove as being formed in the surface of the car wall. Independent Claim 33 is similar to Claim 21 but defines the movable wall portion as being positioned in the groove and the actuator means as moving the wall portion out of the groove.

Knap does not show an elevator car and does not show a groove formed in a surface of one of an elevator car door and an elevator car wall as defined by Claims 21-38. The Knap patent shows sliding doors for a passenger vehicle such as a rapid transit passenger car. The "groove" identified by the Examiner is a clamping strip 31 that has a solid base portion 30 of the seal 22 engaged therein. Thus, the clamping strip 31 (groove) is not formed in a surface of the lateral sill 1 (elevator car door or elevator car wall), as defined by all of the new claims. Also, the Knap movable sealing portion 32 is not in the clamping strip 31 (groove) as defined by new Claims 25, 31 and 33-38.

The Yoo et al. patent shows a brush 36 attached to the trailing edge of an elevator car door 12 and extending into contact with a front panel 18 of the car 10 to function as a noise seal. If the Knap seal 22 were substituted for the Yoo et al. brush 36, that combination would not result in a groove formed in a surface of one of an elevator car door and an elevator car wall as defined by Claims 21-38.

The Examiner is correct that Moody shows an inflatable seal formed such that the movable wall portion does not extend out of the groove when in a relieved state. In fact, the Moody et al. inflatable seal periphery 24 doesn't even extend out of the retainer cavity 30 when inflated. Instead, a solid seal tip 28 in a retainer slot 32 is extended when the seal periphery is inflated. The movable wall of the seal periphery 24 does not move across the gap to seal the gap as defined by Claims 21-38.

Thus, there is no combination of the cited references that provides all of the elements recited in Claims 21-38.

The Examiner stated that the prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to Applicant's disclosure. The Examiner cited: the U.S. Patent No. 5,083,639 issued to Kappeler; the U.S. Patent No. 4,665,653 issued to Franz et al.; the U.S. Patent No. 6,485,029 issued to Moody et al.; and the U.S. Patent No. 3,161,229 issued to Sanders. Applicants reviewed these references and found them to be no more pertinent than the prior art relied upon by the Examiner in his rejections.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the above arguments, Applicants believe that the claims of record now define patentable subject matter over the art of record. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

000132702/0099/657816-1